

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

Restaurateurs Get Choked Up About Anti-Smoking Legislation

by Karla Vermeulen

Smokers achieved a victory in Maryland this winter—and so did believers in the power of small business.

In the 30-day period between the date a complete smoking ban was pushed into law by the state licensing department, and the day it would have taken effect, restaurants, bars, and other small businesses in the state banded together and obtained

enough legislative support to overturn the governor's approval.

"The regulation would have allowed the governor to sign [the ban] into effect without a vote," says Karen Cappel, owner of the 300-seat Harris Crab House in Kent Narrows, Maryland and an active participant in the fight. "We felt this needed to be a legislative issue so a collective effort of elected officials [would] determine the law."

The familiar sight of a drink and a cigarette is being threatened at bars nationwide.

